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Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Appropriation for 2012/13	$524,010,000
Expenditure for 2012/13	$524,002,500
Unencumbered balance for 2012/13	$7,500
Appropriation for 2013/14	$492,622,000
Projected expenditure for 2013/14[a]	$492,622,000
Estimated underexpenditure for 2013/14[a]	–
Proposal submitted by the Secretary-General for 2014/15	$488,946,300
Recommendation of the Advisory Committee for 2014/15	$487,208,400

[a] Estimates as at 11 March 2014.

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I. Introduction

1. **The recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in paragraph 18 below would entail a reduction of $1,737,900 in the proposed budget for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. The Committee has made recommendations and observations on specific issues, where appropriate, in the paragraphs below.**

2. During its consideration of the financing of UNIFIL, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 9 April 2014. The documents reviewed and those used for background by the Committee are listed at the end of the present report. The detailed comments and recommendations of the Committee on the findings of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 and on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations can be found in its forthcoming related reports (A/68/843 and A/68/782, respectively).

II. Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013

3. In its resolution 66/277, the General Assembly appropriated an amount of $524,010,000 gross ($512,894,400 net) for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013. The total amount has been assessed on Member States. Expenditure for the period totalled $524,002,500 gross ($510,636,700 net), leaving an unencumbered balance of $7,500 gross ($2,257,700 net), fully utilizing the appropriation. Underexpenditures under military contingents were offset in part by additional requirements for civilian personnel and operational costs. A detailed analysis of variances is provided in section IV of the performance report (A/68/618).

4. The comments of the Advisory Committee on the information presented in the performance report on individual objects of expenditure can be found, where relevant, in the discussion of the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

III. Financial position and information on the current period

5. The Advisory Committee was informed that as at 14 March 2014, a total of $6,873,933,000 had been assessed on Member States in respect of UNIFIL since its inception. Payments received as at the same date amounted to $6,741,376,000 leaving an outstanding balance of $132,557,000. The Committee was also informed that, as at 31 December 2013, $25,410,000 was owed for troops and $28,101,000 was owed for contingent-owned equipment. As at 10 March 2014, the Force had cash resources of $326,500,000; after allowing for a three-month operating cash reserve of $59,475,000, the remaining balance amounted to $267,025,000.

6. With regard to death and disability compensation, the Advisory Committee was informed that as at 31 December 2013, $22,278,000 had been paid in respect of

516 claims since the inception of the Force and that there were no outstanding claims.

7. The Advisory Committee was informed that as at 28 February 2014, the incumbency rates for UNIFIL were as follows:

Category	*Authorized*[a]	*Encumbered*	*Vacancy rate (percentage)*
Military and police personnel			
Military contingents	15 000	10 087	32.8
Civilian personnel			
International staff	352	299	15.1
National Professional Officer	35	25	28.6
National General Service	659	609	7.6

[a] Represents the highest authorized strength for the period 2013/14.

8. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon request, that of the total number of 299 international staff on board as at 28 February 2014, only 46 spoke Arabic, and that only 9 international staff at the P-4 level or above were Arabic speaking. **The Advisory Committee encourages the mission to continue its ongoing efforts to recruit more Arabic-speaking staff.** The Committee will comment further on linguistic diversity in section III of its cross-cutting report relating to peacekeeping operations (A/68/782).

9. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on current and projected expenditures for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. Expenditure for the period as at 31 January 2014 amounted to $272,237,000 gross. The Secretary-General projects full utilization of the appropriation of $492,622,000 by the end of the current financial period.

IV. Proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015

A. Mandate and planned results

10. The mandate of UNIFIL was established by the Security Council in its resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), expanded in its resolution 1701 (2006) and extended in subsequent resolutions of the Council. The most recent extension of the mandate, to 31 August 2014, was authorized by the Council in its resolution 2115 (2013).

11. The planning assumptions and mission support initiatives for the 2014/15 period are described in paragraphs 7 to 15 of the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed budget (A/68/757). During the budget period UNIFIL will continue its operational activities, with particular focus on the recommendations resulting from the strategic review of the Force, which were endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 2115 (2013) (ibid., para. 7). UNIFIL will continue its efforts to advance the three strategic priorities identified by the review: (a) to establish an integrated,

comprehensive approach to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) to prioritize goals and ensure better integration between UNIFIL, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the United Nations country team; (b) to further involve the Government of Lebanon in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), in particular through seeking to increase its involvement in southern Lebanon; and (c) to further the strategic dialogue and increase the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces, for the gradual assumption of effective and sustainable security control of the UNIFIL area of operations and Lebanese territorial waters, as a key element to support moves towards a permanent ceasefire (ibid., para. 8). In line with the recommendations resulting from the strategic review, and with a focus on the overarching objectives of Council resolution 1701 (2006), UNIFIL will continue to expand and strengthen liaison and coordination with the parties, widen the scope of its strategic partnership with the Lebanese Armed Forces and seek the increased involvement of other arms of the Government in southern Lebanon (ibid., para. 12).

12. In paragraph 13 of the budget document, the Secretary-General indicates that, in line with the recommendations resulting from the strategic review, and in conjunction with the civilian staffing review of the Force, UNIFIL conducted a thorough review of the structure of its support component. According to the report, the revised structure of the Mission Support Division reflects the consolidation of a number of functions and staffing complements driven by the need to streamline operations, improve support services, reduce duplication of effort and redundancies and ensure that the nature of functions are complementary to the work of the organizational units (ibid., para. 31). As a consequence, the proposed staffing level for the Division reflects a net reduction of 38 international and 43 national posts for the 2014/15 budget period, inclusive of the conversion of 12 international posts to national posts. The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed staffing reductions were all based on redundancies or surplus capacities and that they brought efficiencies through the grouping of similar functions, the better use of contract arrangements in place and a review of staffing requirements in consideration of the sustainment phase of the Force. The Committee's detailed comments on the related staffing proposals are contained in paragraphs 19 to 29 below.

13. Paragraphs 16 to 21 of the budget document outline the regional mission cooperation initiatives to be undertaken by UNIFIL during the 2014/15 period. As a regional hub and service provider, UNIFIL will maintain its close cooperation with neighbouring peacekeeping missions and other United Nations entities in the areas of information and communications technology services, conduct and discipline, staff counselling services, HIV/AIDS and training. UNIFIL will continue to support the Observer Group Lebanon of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), which is under the operational command of the Head of Mission/Force Commander.

B. Resource requirements

14. The proposed budget for UNIFIL for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, which provides for the deployment of 15,000 military contingent personnel, 313 international staff and 653 national staff, amounts to $488,946,300 gross, representing a decrease of $3,675,700, or 0.7 per cent in gross terms, as compared with the apportionment of $492,622,000 for 2013/14, which is expected to be fully utilized. The overall decrease is attributable primarily to reduced requirements related to the deployment of vessels of the Maritime Task Force and the lower projected cost of diesel fuel. Detailed information on the financial resources requested and an analysis of variances will be provided in sections II and IV of the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed budget (A/68/757).

1. Military contingent personnel

Category	*Authorized*[a]	*Proposed*[a]	*Variance*
Military and police personnel			
Military contingents	15 000	15 000	–

[a] Represents the highest authorized strength for the period 2014/15.

15. The proposed budget for military contingent personnel for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 amounts to $302,354,600, an increase of $845,000, or 0.3 per cent, as compared with the apportionment for 2013/14. The increased requirements are attributable primarily to (a) higher costs for rotation travel based on the current cost of air charters; (b) increased reimbursements to troop-contributing Governments for major equipment and self-sustainment owing to the deployment of additional and/or replacement contingent units; (c) increased costs for rations resulting from the application of the United Nations operational rate of exchange of €0.725 per United States dollar as at December 2013 to the estimate for the 2014/15 period, compared with the rate of €0.770 per United States dollar applied for the 2013/14 period; and (d) increased requirements for mission subsistence allowances owing to the application of a delayed deployment factor of 14 per cent to the estimate of 232 military staff officers, based on recent deployment patterns, compared with the assumption of the full deployment of 199 staff officers for the 2013/14 period (ibid., para. 69). The Advisory Committee notes, however, that the application of a delayed deployment factor of 14 per cent in respect of the authorized complement of 232 military staff officers in 2014/15 would not have resulted in an increase in the requirement for mission subsistence allowance compared with the full deployment of 199 staff officers in the 2013/14 period. In this regard, the Committee was informed that the 2013/14 budget actually reflects a delayed deployment factor of 26.4 per cent for the authorized level of 232 staff officers. Therefore, the Committee notes that the approved budget for 2013/14 provides mission subsistence allowance for the deployment of an average of 171 military staff officers in UNIFIL, whereas the proposed budget for 2014/15 provides for the deployment of an average of 199 military staff officers, which has resulted in the increased requirement for mission subsistence allowance.

2. Civilian personnel

Category	*Approved 2013/14*[a]	*Proposed 2014/15*[a]	*Variance*
Civilian personnel			
International staff	352	313	-39
National Professional Officers	35	35	0
National General Service	659	618	-41

[a] Represents the highest authorized strength for the period 2014/15.

16. The proposed budget for civilian personnel for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 amounts to $96,419,300, an increase of $49,000, or 0.1 per cent, as compared with the apportionment for 2013/14. The increase of $49,000 is the net result of a decreased requirement for international staff of $7,993,100, or 12.7 per cent, and an increased requirement for national staff of $8,042,100, or 24.1 per cent, compared with the current period. The reduced requirement for international staff is attributable primarily to: (a) the net reduction of 39 international posts; (b) the conversion of 13 Field Service posts to national posts; and (c) the application of the rate of 62.7 per cent of net salaries for common staff costs, compared with the rate of 67.3 per cent applied in the 2013/14 budget (A/68/757, para. 70). It is indicated in the report that the higher estimated requirement for national staff results from higher salaries, staff assessment and common staff costs and the application of a 5 per cent vacancy factor to the estimates for national General Service posts, compared with the 8 per cent applied in the 2013/14 budget, offset in part by the net reduction of 41 national posts (A/68/757, para. 71). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the cost basis for the calculation of national General Service salaries was changed from GS-4/step 1 in 2013/14 to GS-4/step 6 in 2014/15 and that the percentage applied for the calculation of common staff costs for all national staff was increased from 35 per cent in 2013/14 to 40 per cent for the 2014/15 period. The Committee will make further comments on the calculation of common staff costs in section III of its cross-cutting issues relating to peacekeeping operations (A/68/782).

17. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the most recent revision of the local salary scale for national General Service staff and for National Professional Officers in Lebanon was communicated to the Force on 26 July 2012, with an effective date of 1 March 2012, and that as a result an amount of approximately $1 million in salaries expenditures related to the period from 1 March to 30 June 2012 had to be absorbed from within the approved 2012/13 resources, given that the financial period 2011/12 was closed at the time of the implementation of the revision in August 2012.

18. The proposed vacancy rates applied to the cost estimates for civilian personnel for 2014/15 are as follows: 5 per cent for international staff, 10 per cent for National Professional Officers and 5 per cent for national General Service staff, as compared with 5 per cent, 10 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively, for the current period. According to the Secretary-General, the proposed vacancy rates for the 2014/15 period for international and national staff take into account recent incumbency patterns, the actual average vacancy rates of 9.6 per cent for international staff and 9.9 per cent for national staff for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2013, and a net reduction in civilian staffing by 80 posts (39 international and 41 national)

(A/68/757, para. 58). The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 28 February 2014, the actual vacancy rate for international staff was 15.1 per cent and that the average vacancy rate for international staff for the period from 1 July 2013 to 28 February 2014 was 10.8 per cent. **In view of the information provided, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly apply a vacancy rate of 8 per cent for international staff in UNIFIL for the 2014/15 period, and it concurs with the other proposed vacancy rates.**

Structural review

19. The staffing changes proposed by the Secretary-General for 2014/15 stem mainly from the review of the structure of its support component and are summarized as follows:

(a) Under the operations component, it is proposed that the HIV/AIDS Unit for community mobilization and outreach to vulnerable populations and national institutions be strengthened, as outlined in Security Council resolution 1983 (2011);

(b) Under the mission support component, the following is proposed: (i) establishment of a new Supply Chain Section, which would incorporate the functions of assets disposal, receipt and inspection and inventory control, and would subsume the existing Supply Section; (ii) redeployment of the Contingent-owned Equipment Unit from the Property Management Section to the Joint Logistics Operations Centre; (iii) abolishment of the General Services Section and integration of the Section's existing Property Survey and Claims Unit into the Compliance and Monitoring Unit, under the Office of the Director of Mission Support, transfer of the Contracts Management Unit to the Office of the Deputy Director of Mission Support, transfer of the Travel Unit to the new Human Resources Section (formerly the Civilian Personnel Section), and subsuming of the Mail and Pouch Unit into Regional Communications and Information Technology Services; (iv) transfer of the Facilities Management Unit to the Engineering Section; (v) establishment of a Protocol Unit under the Senior Administrative Officer; (vi) combining of the Transport, Movement Control and Aviation Sections into the new Transport, Movement and Aviation Section, in an effort to tighten the span of control on the related functions; and (vii) integration of the Geographic Information Systems Unit from the Engineering Section into Regional Communications and Information Technology Services.

20. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that in the 2013/14 period, modifications were implemented in the support component through the streamlining and consolidation of a number of functions in offices in order to facilitate financial and management advisory services, including with regard to the Umoja pilot implementation in UNIFIL. The support component was modified at the section level in order to better deliver the streamlined processes under a Deputy Director of Mission Support, in lieu of the previous separate structures of Administrative Services and Integrated Support Services. The Committee was informed that this reorganization also sought to adjust the span of control, gain efficiencies in the grouping of similar tasks, make better use of contracts in place and streamline processes, where possible. The Committee was further informed that central warehousing was identified as being among the priority tasks in order to align the Force with a global supply chain approach and Umoja requirements.

21. The Advisory Committee was informed that for the 2014/15 period, pursuant to the strategic review, a number of considerations were taken into account in the formulation of proposed resource requirements for the mission support component, including a review of supply lines, locations, service modalities and organizational structure, which resulted in the need for the realignment of the functions and consequent disbanding of the General Services Section and the Property Management Section. The Committee was informed that the merger of the three movement-related sections into one Transport, Movement and Aviation Section would provide an improved span of control for the Deputy Director of Mission Support, who is also responsible for the Contracts Management Unit and the Procurement, Supply Chain, Medical and Engineering Sections, and the Joint Logistics Operations Centre. The Committee was informed that the consolidation of warehousing functions would permit UNIFIL to realize efficiencies and service gains in future periods and that the warehouses would be grouped into a larger centralized warehouse. The Committee was further informed that the move of the Contingent-Owned Equipment Unit to the Joint Logistics Operations Centre was a step towards developing synergies in that area and towards maximizing the use of cross-functional resources during peak workloads.

22. The staffing changes proposed under each component are described in the budget document (A/68/757, paras. 25-54). The Secretary-General proposes two post reclassifications, 15 post conversions, the redeployment of 203 posts, the reassignment of two posts and the abolishment of 80 posts.

Recommendations on posts

Reclassifications

23. A total of two post reclassifications are proposed under the mission support component. In the Conduct and Discipline Unit, it is proposed that an existing post of Conduct and Discipline Officer (P-2) be reclassified to the P-3 level, and, in the Engineering Section, it is proposed that one post of Material and Assets Officer (P-3) be reclassified to the Field Service level.

Conversions

24. The Secretary-General is proposing the following 15 post conversions, of which a total of 12 are nationalizations of existing international posts:

(a) Under executive direction and management, the conversion of one Field Service post of Administrative Assistant to a national General Service post;

(b) Under the support component, the conversion of one post of Security Officer (P-3) to a Field Service post and one Field Service post of Administrative Assistant to a national General Service post in the Security Section; the conversion of one Field Service post of Administrative Assistant to a national General Service post in the Human Resources Section; the conversion of one Field Service post of Information Management Assistant to a national General Service post in the General Services Section, which is also proposed for redeployment to Regional Communications and Information Technology Services; the conversion of one P-5 post of Chief of the Property Management Section to a Field Service post of Property Management Officer in the Supply Chain Section; the conversion of one Field Service post of Property Management Officer and three Field Service posts of

Property Management Assistants to national General Service posts, which are also proposed for redeployment to the Joint Logistics Operations Centre; the conversion of one Field Service post to a national General Service post in the Supply Chain Section; and the conversion of one Field Service post of Telecommunications Technician, two Field Service posts of Information Technology Assistant and one post of Inventory and Supply Assistant to national General Service posts in Regional Communications and Information Technology Services.

Reassignments and redeployments of posts

25. Under the operations component, it is proposed that one national General Service post from the Human Resources Section be reassigned to the HIV/AIDS Unit.

26. Under the mission support component, the Secretary-General proposes the following:

(a) Redeployment of five posts (2 Field Service and 3 national General Service) from the Contracts Management Unit of the former General Services Section and reassignment of one Field Service post from the former General Services Section to the Office of the Director of Mission Support;

(b) Redeployment of one post of Administrative Officer (P-4) from the immediate Office of the Director of Mission Support to the Office of the Deputy Director;

(c) Redeployment of five posts (1 Field Service and 4 national General Service) from the former General Services Section to the Protocol Unit in the Office of the Senior Administrative Officer;

(d) Redeployment of seven posts (1 P-3, 2 Field Service and 4 national General Service) from the General Services Section to the Compliance and Monitoring Unit in the Office of the Director of Mission Support;

(e) Redeployment to the new Human Resources Section of a total of 27 posts (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-3, 8 Field Service and 16 national General Service) from the existing Civilian Personnel Section, four posts (2 Field Service and 2 national General Service) from the General Services Section and 9 posts (2 P-3, 1 Field Service, 2 National Professional Officer and 4 national General Service) from the Integrated Training Unit, in view of the recommendation resulting from the civilian staffing review that the functions related to training be incorporated into the new Human Resources Section;

(f) Redeployment to the new Supply Chain Section of a total of 57 posts (1 P-5, 3 P-4, 12 Field Service and 41 national General Service) from the existing Supply Section, reassignment of one Field Service post from the Property Management Section and redeployment to the Supply Chain Section of a total of 24 posts (2 P-3, 4 Field Service and 18 national General Service) from the former Property Management Section, 15 posts (2 Field Service, 1 National Professional Officer and 12 national General Service) from the Engineering Section, 14 posts (2 Field Service and 12 national General Service) from the former Transport Section and 8 posts (2 Field Service and 6 national General Service) from Regional Communications and Information Technology Services;

(g) Redeployment of two posts (1 P-4 and 1 national General Service) from the immediate office of the Deputy Director of Mission Support to the Medical Service;

(h) Redeployment to the Joint Logistics Operations Centre a total of 10 posts (1 P-4, 1 P-3, 2 Field Service and 6 national General Service) from the former Property Management Section and three posts (2 Field Service and 1 national General Service) from the former General Services Section;

(i) Redeployment to the new Transport, Movement and Aviation Section of a total of 86 posts (18 Field Service and 68 national General Service) from the existing Transport Section, two posts (1 P-5 and 1 national General Service) from the former General Services Section, 25 posts (11 Field Service and 14 national General Service) from the existing Movement Control Section, 11 posts (1 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 P-2, 3 Field Service and 5 national General Service) from the existing Aviation Section and one National General Service post from the immediate Office of the Director of Mission Support;

(j) Redeployment to Regional Communications and Information Technology Services of a total of nine posts (1 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 P-2, 3 Field Service and 3 national General Service) from the Engineering Section and four posts (1 Field Service and 3 national General Service) from the former General Services Section.

Abolishments

27. The Secretary-General is proposing that a total of 80 posts, comprising 26 international and 54 national posts, be abolished, as follows: two P-4 posts (one Staff Development Officer and one Contracts Manager), four P-3 posts (1 Administrative Officer, 1 Facilities Management Officer, 1 Logistics Operations Officer and 1 Human Resources Officer), 20 Field Service posts (4 Administrative Assistants, 1 Human Resources Officer, 2 Procurement Assistants, 1 Facilities Management Assistant, 1 Receiving and Inspection Assistant, 1 Contingent-owned Equipment Assistant, 1 Engineering Technician (Generator), 1 Water and Sanitation Technician, 1 Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Technician, 1 Movement Control Assistant, 1 Transport Officer, 1 Transport Assistant and 4 Telecommunications Assistant/Technicians), and 54 National General Service posts (1 Driver, 1 Budget Assistant, 9 Team Assistants, 16 Facilities Management Assistants, 18 Maintenance Workers, 1 Electrician and 8 Language Assistants) (A/68/757, paras. 37-54).

28. **The Advisory Committee does not object to the staffing proposals of the Secretary-General for the 2014/15 period. The Committee notes that the outcome of the civilian staffing review is the proposed abolishment of 80 posts in the 2014/15 period and the nationalization of 12 international Field Service posts. The Committee recalls paragraph 23 of General Assembly resolution 66/264, in which the Assembly underlined the importance of the Secretary-General comprehensively reviewing the civilian staffing requirements for each peacekeeping mission, with particular attention to the feasibility of nationalizing Field Service posts. The Committee supports the increasing trend towards the nationalization of posts and positions in peacekeeping missions.** The Committee will comment further on the nationalization of international posts in section III of its report on cross-cutting issues relating to peacekeeping operations (A/68/782).

29. **The Advisory Committee takes note of the proposed restructuring of the Mission Support Division in UNIFIL and expects that the new organizational structure will enhance efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to report on the results of this initiative in the relevant performance report.**

3. Operational costs

30. Operational costs for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 are estimated at $90,172,400, a decrease of $4,569,700, or 4.8 per cent, as compared with the apportionment for 2013/14. The decrease is attributable mainly to reduced requirements under:

(a) Facilities and infrastructure ($2,548.7, or 9.3 per cent);

(b) Naval transportation ($3,289,800, or 8.8 per cent);

(c) Ground transportation ($1,068,600, or 13 per cent), attributable to:

(i) Lower projected cost of $0.87 per litre of diesel fuel, compared with the $0.92 per litre applied in the 2013/14 period, and more stringent monitoring of fuel consumption;

(ii) Reduction in spare parts requirements as a result of the lower number of United Nations-owned vehicles in the 2014/15 period compared with 2013/14;

(iii) Lower requirements for liability insurance resulting from the lower projected number of vehicles (A/68/757, para. 73);

(d) Other supplies, services and equipment ($381,000, or 11.2 per cent), mainly attributable to:

(i) Fewer acquisitions to replace other equipment;

(ii) Decrease in freight and related costs related to internal transportation costs and shipments from other missions, based on recent expenditure patterns; and

(iii) Lower projected costs for training fees, supplies and services owing to the increased utilization of regional and in-house resources for training (ibid., para. 78).

Facilities and infrastructure

31. The estimated requirements for facilities and infrastructure for the 2014/15 period amount to $24,727,600, a decrease of $2,548,700, or 9.3 per cent, as compared with the apportionment for the current period. The decrease is attributable mainly to: (a) the lower projected cost of $0.87 per litre of diesel fuel for generators compared with the $0.92 per litre applied in the 2013/14 budget, and lower fuel consumption resulting from more stringent monitoring and based on recent consumption patterns; (b) the completion of security projects in the 2013/14 period and the closure of seven locations and the contraction of two locations, resulting in lower requirements for field defence supplies; (c) the lower requirements for construction services owing to the completion of major construction projects in previous periods; and (d) the exclusion of a provision for the acquisition of generators, owing to the extended utilization of existing equipment.

32. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that over the past three financial periods, generator fuel consumption at the UNIFIL Naqoura headquarters has decreased from 3,773,939 litres in the period 2011/12 to 3,632,132 litres in 2012/13, and is projected to amount to 2,461,034 litres in 2013/14. The Committee was informed that solar energy plants recently completed in UNIFIL currently account for 15 per cent of the energy consumed at the UNIFIL Green Hill camp, which is part of the Naqoura headquarters, and that the total production from solar plants at the Green Hill camp in 2013 was 487,320 kilowatt hours, which represents approximately 4 per cent of the energy usage in UNIFIL headquarters. **The Advisory Committee commends UNIFIL for its efforts to generate energy using solar power.**

Naval transportation

33. The estimated requirements for naval transportation for the 2014/15 period amount to $34,205,700, a decrease of $3,289,800, or 8.8 per cent, compared with the apportionment for the current period. The decrease is attributed to the projected deployment of the vessels in the Maritime Task Force for an average period of nine months in the 2014/15 period, compared with the average deployment period of 10 months in 2013/14 (A/68/757, para. 75). According to the report of the Secretary-General, a total of four frigates and four fast boats will be deployed in the 2014/15 period to monitor the maritime border of Lebanon, including joint operational exercises with the Lebanese Armed Forces, compared with three frigates, four patrol boats and one offshore patrol boat in the current period.

34. According to the performance report, additional requirements of $11,954,100, or 37.6 per cent of the appropriation, are mainly attributable to the settlement of outstanding charges in the 2012/13 period in the total amount of $9.7 million for the rental and operation of vessels related to the 2011/12 period (A/68/618, para. 45). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that funds can be obligated under letters of assist only upon the finalization and signing of the letters of assist by both the United Nations and the contributing Governments and that, in the case of the Maritime Task Force, the additional charges from the period 2011/12 resulted from delays in the finalization of the relevant letters of assist.

4. Other matters

Regional mission cooperation

35. According to the report of the Secretary-General, as a regional hub and service provider, UNIFIL will continue to maintain its close cooperation with neighbouring peacekeeping missions and other United Nations entities in the areas of information and communications technology services, conduct and discipline, staff counselling services, HIV/AIDS and training (A/68/757, para. 16). Regional Communications and Information Technology Services will proceed in consolidating information technology platforms through the replacement, upgrading and/or migration of existing software packages throughout the region, and UNIFIL will also continue to provide support for the implementation of the Umoja system to the Middle East missions (ibid, para. 18).

36. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the regionalized approach to information and communications technology activities in the Middle East covers UNIFIL, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF),

the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/269, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to achieve economies of scale within and between field missions, without undermining their operational requirements and the implementation of their respective mandates. The Committee was informed that the initiative has aligned information and communications technology services in the region and established a unified regional management structure under the Chief of Regional Information and Communications Technology Services (D-1) located in UNIFIL and a Deputy Regional Chief (P-5) located in UNDOF, and that the two positions continue to be responsible for implementing their respective mission workplans and strategic regional information and communications technology goals under a regional governance panel. The Committee was informed that no other posts in the region are specifically dedicated to the regional concept. In that regard, the information and communications technology staff of the two missions remain under the direct management of each mission's specific hierarchical structure and are responsible to each mission's senior leadership for mission-specific information and communications technology operations. In addition, each mission works under a coordinated regional information and communications technology management umbrella to implement regional strategic goals aimed at reducing disparity between the missions, eliminating duplication of effort and realizing efficiencies.

V. Recommendations

37. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of UNIFIL for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 are contained in section V of the performance report (A/68/618). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the unencumbered balance of $7,500, as well as other income and adjustments in the amount of $6,996,400, be credited to Member States.**

38. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of UNIFIL for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 are set out in section V of the proposed budget (A/68/757). **In view of its recommendation in paragraph 18 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Assembly appropriate an amount of $487,208,400 for the maintenance of the Force for the 12-month period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 and assess an amount of $81,201,400 for the period from 1 July to 31 August 2014. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNIFIL beyond 31 August 2014, the Committee recommends that the Assembly assess an amount of $406,007,000 for the period from 1 September 2014 to 30 June 2015.**

Documentation

- Budget performance of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 (A/68/618)
- Budget for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (A/68/757)
- Financial report and audited financial statements for the 12-month period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 and report of the Board of Auditors on United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/68/5 (Vol. II))
- Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the financial performance report for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (A/67/780/Add.9 and Corr.1)
- General Assembly resolutions 66/277 and 67/279 on the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
- Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 1701 (2006), and 2115 (2013)